



Oh, that explains it



Michigan Merit Curriculum High School Graduation Requirements

[illegible]

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EARNING CREDIT

What the Michigan Merit Curriculum Law Says

Sec. 1278a(4)(a) A student is considered to have completed a credit if the student successfully completes the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the Michigan Department of Education that apply to the credit. A school district or public school academy shall base its determination of whether a student has successfully completed the subject area content expectations or guidelines developed by the department that apply to a credit at least in part on the student's performance on the assessments developed or selected by the Department or on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a student's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

Sec. 1278a(4)(c) A school district or public school academy also must grant a credit if the student earns a qualifying score, as determined by the Department, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area by the Department or the student earns a qualifying score, as determined by the school district or public school academy, on 1 or more assessments developed or selected by the school district or public school academy that measure a student's understanding of the subject area content expectations or guidelines that apply to the credit.

Sec. 1278b(2) If a student successfully completes 1 or more of the high school credits required in the Michigan Merit Curriculum before entering high school, the student shall be given high school credit for that credit.

Background Information

The Michigan Merit Curriculum lays out a new foundation for “credit” by requiring that credit be awarded not by the commonly used Carnegie unit, which is based on seat time, but based on a student’s demonstration that he or she has successfully met the content expectations for the credit area.

The Michigan Merit Curriculum content expectations can be met in various learning settings such as career and technical education; work-based learning programs; integrated sequences such as humanities (e.g., combining English, social studies, and art); integrated math and science classes; project-based learning; college credit opportunities like dual enrollment; advancement placement and International Baccalaureate programs; and online learning. Regardless in what setting, students must demonstrate they have met the subject area content expectations for that credit.

Questions & Answers

1. Q: What is a credit?

A: A credit is a completed unit of study as measured by proficiency in a predetermined set of content expectations (e.g., Algebra I, Biology, English Language Arts I2, etc.). Students *earn* credit -- students *take* a course.

2. Q: How can a student earn credit?

A: Students may earn credit if they successfully complete subject area content expectations or guidelines for the credit. The assignment of credit must be based, at least in part, on student performance on subject area assessments which measure the extent to which they meet the credit expectations and guidelines.

Beyond earning credit through a traditional course setting, a student may earn a credit in a variety of ways, including, but not limited to:

- A related course(s) in which content standards are embedded (e.g., math standards embedded in a career-technical program, industrial technology course, or vocational course)
- Non-traditional course work
- Independent teacher-guided study
- Testing out

In addition, the district may allow students to satisfy credit requirements through:

- Dual Enrollment
- Advanced Placement Courses
- International Baccalaureate or other “early college” experiences or programs

3. Q: Do students have to earn credits in the Michigan Merit Curriculum in a particular sequence?

A: No. The law provides local districts and students with the flexibility to establish the sequence and pace of instruction.

4. Q: Is a student allowed to receive high school credit for coursework prior to high school?

A: Yes. The law states if a student successfully completes one or more high school credits before entering high school, the student **must be given graduation credit** for that credit **if:** 1) the district determines a student has met Michigan Department of Education high school course/credit content expectations; and, 2) the district uses an assessment to certify that the student is proficient in the course/credit content expectations, and the expected level of proficiency is the same as for high school. While a student must receive graduation credit, a district continues to have the ability to establish graduation requirements beyond the Michigan Merit Curriculum.

In other words, if middle school students meet the same expectations and proficiency level as high school students, they must receive credit. This is true even if textbooks and other resources are different. The key is mastering the course content expectations.

5. Q: Must a school provide students with the opportunity to take all required Michigan Merit credits/classes? For example, if a district is able to offer only Chemistry and is not able to offer Physics, may the district require all students to take Chemistry without the option of choosing Physics? What if a school is not able to hire enough teachers trained in these areas?

A: Under the law, a district should make every effort to offer the curriculum necessary for the student to meet the Michigan Merit Curriculum credit requirements. However, the law provides districts with a great deal of flexibility to meet credit requirements, including, but limited to: alternative instructional delivery methods such as teaching certain subjects in certain years, district partnerships, online courses, dual enrollment, community college partnerships, etc.

If a district is still unable to meet all curricular or other requirements outlined in the law, a district may apply to the Michigan Department of Education for permission to phase in one or more requirements. To apply, the school district must submit a proposed phase-in plan to the Department which outlines its strategy to make satisfactory progress toward full implementation of the requirements. If the plan is not approved, the Department must work with the school district to develop a satisfactory plan.

If a school district demonstrates to the Department it is unable to hire enough highly qualified teachers, the Department will work with the school district to develop a plan to hire enough highly qualified teachers to meet the requirements. However, for a high school to be accredited, it is required to ensure all curriculum credit requirements are made available to the affected students. For a definition of “Highly Qualified”, see page 8.

6. Q: Will districts be allowed to give ½ credits?

A: Yes. The sequence, pace, and "packaging" of credits is the prerogative of the district. Districts may award credit units even smaller than ½, if appropriate.

7. Q: How can students receive credit without passing a class?

A: A student may demonstrate proficiency in the credit area by testing out (passing a test or battery of assessments approved by a district), which measures a student's understanding of the content expectations for that credit.

8. Q: Does the content and assessment for a credit offered in both middle and high school need to be the same?

A: While the textbook and other resources may vary, students should learn the same content and be held to the same level of proficiency whether they earn the high school graduation credit in middle or high school.